

UPDATE

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The quarterly newsletter of the General Services Division

Montana Department of Administration • Website address: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/gsd>

Winter 2004

PROCUREMENT NEWS AND NOTES

Procurement Legislation. The General Services Division is in the process of developing a list of legislation needed in the area of public procurement. If you have any suggestions for modifications to the Montanan Procurement Act, please call Sheryl Olson at 444-3315.

Welcome to Hank Voderberg. Hank Voderberg has recently joined the staff of the State Procurement Bureau as a systems analyst. Hank will be working on all areas involving e-procurement such as expanding the use of the PeopleSoft purchasing module, exploring on-line vendor registration systems, enhancing the State's OneStop solicitation website, and developing e-commerce applications.

Using the State's Purchasing Card for Airline Reservations. As the result of a recommendation from the Legislative Auditor, the Department of Administration now requires that all airline reservations be made using the State's purchasing card. The purchasing card must be used whether booking a flight through a travel agent or through the internet. To obtain a purchasing card or for any questions regarding the purchasing card, please contact Tom Gustin at 444-3312.

SABHRS Update. The SABHRS Financial system will be upgraded to a new version during the period of February 14 - 22, 2004. This upgrade will ensure that the State remains on a supported version of PeopleSoft and obtains the benefits of the new internet technology. During this period there will be no add or update access to the production version of the SABHRS Financials application or database. SABHRS will have a copy of the current version of Financials available

during this four working day outage for viewing and reporting capabilities only.

During the week of January 20 - 23, 2004, users will have access to a copy of an upgraded 8.4 version of the software. Users may enter transactions and run processes and reports during a two-hour window on Wednesday, January 21, from 9 to 11 a.m. Your participation will be critical for verifying information, setup and performance. For more information, please contact the SABHRS office at 444-5700.

Procurement Format, Template, and Language Requirements. Some agencies may still not be aware that all state agencies are required to use the most current form of the General Service Division's contract boilerplate, IFB forms, RFP templates, Limited Solicitation forms, Sole Source Justification Forms, and all pertinent standard statements, and forms unless exceptions are approved by the Division. (See Section 10.1 of your agency procurement delegation agreement.) All of these forms are found at our website at: <http://discoveringmontana.com/doa/gsd/css/default.asp>. Also, please remember to build your solicitations directly from the documents located on the website, not from any existing agency file documents because GSD forms are updated frequently. If you have any suggestions for how to improve these forms, templates or standard language or need assistance in finding or using these forms, please call the State Procurement Bureau at 444-2575.

Vehicle Bid Update. Just a reminder to all agencies that twice per model year, the State issues bids for passenger cars and light duty trucks (up to one ton). Bids for patrol cars are issued once per model year. The specific dates for these bids are posted on the Division's website under Requisition Time Schedule (RTS).

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The dates for 2004 are February 3 and September 10 for passenger cars and light duty trucks. The date for the patrol vehicles is also set for September 10. Requisitions received after these two dates will be accepted only on an emergency basis because the State receives discounts for volume purchases. For more information, contact Rhonda Grandy at the State Procurement Bureau at (406) 444-3320.

Procurement Training. Penny Moon, SPB Contracts Officer, will be offering the following classes over the next few months. Contact the Professional Development Center at 444-3985 or e-mail pdc01@state.mt.us for registration and cost information.

Purchasing Update - January 23, 2004, January 30, 2004, February 6, 2004. *This class will include a discussion of those procurement issues that have changed in the last two years (since the first Basic and Advanced Purchasing classes were presented).*

Initiating and Navigating the RFP Process - March 11, 2004. *An in-depth, step-by-step look at the RFP document, process, and some do's and don'ts. It will also include some exercises on writing the scope of work and evaluation criteria.*

Basic Purchasing - April 29, 2004. *This class covers procurement ethics, resources, levels of authority and delegation. It also covers the procurement tools used for small purchases, limited solicitation, sole source and sole brand, and term contracts.*

Advanced Purchasing - May 6, 2004. *This class covers building, writing, opening and awarding Requests for Proposals, Invitations for Bids, and Requests for Information. It focuses on advanced procurement issues such as leasing versus buying, public access, protests, grants, and ethics.*

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT NEWS AND NOTES

National Threat Level Updates. Changes to the National Security Threat Levels are now posted to the MINE website. Attached to each threat level is a series of measures taken by the General Services Division in order to respond to the particular threat level. Please note that all state employees are now required to wear their State ID badges at all times regardless of the threat level.

ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL IS SEEKING YOUR INPUT

Do you have an idea about how all of Montana state government could be improved by certain changes in the ways we use technology to conduct our business? If so, the newly created Enterprise Solutions Advisory Council would like to hear about it.

This past fall, Governor Martz created the "Enterprise Solutions Advisory Council" as a means to bring agencies together to discuss common business processes that involve every state agency and to seek out ways to make improvements in those areas. As we all realize, every state agency, regardless of their individual mission, conducts their business using technology involving human resource systems, financial operations, budget processes, and procurement processes. The focus of this Council is to find ways that these statewide processes can be improved to result in greater efficiencies, better customer service and of course, cost savings to the taxpayers.

The Council is meeting every two months to review suggestions that are submitted by anyone with an idea for how to improve these business processes. Ideas that are submitted will be reviewed and researched by the Council. For instance, the Council is currently reviewing the possible use of an electronic solution to the State's recruitment and selection process. In addition, the Council is also examining the options and benefits of making vendor payments by electronic funds transfer.

If you have an idea for how our state government could better use technology to address the basic business processes affecting every state agency, let the Council know by submitting your idea through an "Issue Action Form." That form may be found at <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/itsd/policy/councils/esc/esc.asp>. If you'd like to talk to someone about Council activities, go to this website for a list of the current members.

Technology can't solve every problem in state government, but we should sure take advantage of it whenever we can to improve the services we provide to Montanans.

PRINT AND MAIL SERVICES NEWS AND NOTES

Print Services News. Agencies with color photocopy needs should review the term contract for color photocopies, available on the GSD website. The contract holder is Action Print, TC170-04-C. The rates are very competitive at 45 cents to 75 cents for an 8-1/2" x 11" copy; or 85 cents to 90 cents for an 11" x 17" copy, depending on quantity. Many options exist for paper style, size and combinations for copying. Any copy work over 200 impressions must still be brought to Print Services.

Print Services received a good reception for the laminating that can now be provided at the main shop. The rate for laminating letter size sheets is 40 cents each or 60 cents each for larger sizes.

The computer-to-plate system has been installed and the quality results have been excellent. With this system, Print Services is able to print directly from the original file rather than from a second or third generation copy. The result is clean halftones at up to 110 DPI and very little shade variation. Samples are available for viewing of projects that have gone to computer-to-plate.

Mail Services News. Mail Services said goodbye to Bill Spurzem in December, as he retired from State service. Bill had 38 years experience in mail and will be missed. Jim Ahern is the new Print to Post Coordinator and will be happy to assist in any questions you have concerning your mail options. Jim can be reached at 444-1833.

A new postage procedure will be initiated by the United States Post Office (USPS) in 2004. Currently, the USPS gives Mail Services rebates for mail that is OCR readable to the 3 and 5 digit mail codes. In January, the process will change to a system that requires Mail Services to affix postage at the lowest rate possible and if the addresses do not meet the best postage rates, the USPS will charge additional postage. The net effect to the agency will remain the same.

However, Mail Services took this opportunity to change the handling rates for certain types of processed mail. Machineable type mail rates have been lowered from 5 cents per piece to 3 cents per piece. One of the best ways for agencies to hold the costs of mailing down is to ensure that every effort is made to have good, clean addresses for machineable mail. A mail piece with a good address has a postage rate of \$.278 per piece. If you have a mailing and want a total cost estimate, you can contact Nels Strandberg at 444-3821.

PURCHASING CARD

Free, Free, Free! Effective October 1, 2003, the monthly purchasing card fee has been suspended for active purchasing cards under the node operated by the Department of Administration. Originally set at \$1 per card per month, the fee was reduced to 50-cents per card on July 1, 2003.

Friendly Reminder. Agencies are reminded not to use the purchasing card for fuel. The State's contract with Wright Express for electronic fleet card services is exclusive, with cards issued by the Montana Public Vehicle Fueling Program. Also, agencies run the risk of losing the 18.4 cents per gallon Federal Excise Tax exemption on gasoline when the purchasing card is used to buy fuel or when fuel purchases are reimbursed directly to an employee.

Airfare Purchase Audit Report Issued. The Legislative Audit Division recently completed a performance audit of agency purchases of commercial airfares. Contained in the report were two specific recommendations, relative to the purchasing card, recommending that the Department of Administration:

- Direct state agencies to use the state purchasing card for airfare purchases.
- Use the state purchasing card to obtain and analyze management information to improve state airfare purchasing activities.

A summary of the audit may be viewed at: <http://leg.state.mt.us/css/audit/summary/03p-07.asp>. For more information, please contact Tom Gustin at 444-3312, e-mail tgustin@state.mt.us.

QUESTION OF THE QUARTER

If we receive a federal grant that earmarks the money to be subcontracted to specific companies or non-profit entities and each subcontract is \$15,000 or less, how do we ensure compliance with the Montana Procurement Act?

First, according to the section 18-4-132(1), MCA, the Montana Procurement Act does not apply to "grants or contracts between the state and ... other governments." A "grant" is defined in section 18-4-123(11), MCA, to mean "the furnishing by the federal government of assistance, whether financial or otherwise, to a person or agency to support a program authorized by law."

Second, section 18-4-132(1), MCA, also states that the Montana Procurement Act or its rules "do not prevent any governmental body or political subdivision from complying with the terms and conditions of any grant, bequest, or cooperative agreement."

Therefore, regardless of dollar amount, if the federal grant specifies who you must subcontract with, you are exempted from the Montana Procurement Act.

PUBLIC VEHICLE FUELING

An Even Better Bargain! The Vehicle Fueling Program is funded by a monthly service fee collected by Wright Express on behalf of the department. Based on net purchases, the fee is assessed in the month following purchasing activity and is itemized on the invoice as an accounting fee. Effective December 1, 2003, the fee will be reduced from .005 (one-half of one percent) to .0025 (one-fourth of one percent). Sincere thanks to all the government fleets that have supported the program since its inception in 1993.

Rebate Suspended. Extremely low retail margins in a number of Montana fuel markets have forced Town Pump to suspend the 2-cent per gallon rebate offered to

government fleets using the State's Wright Express card. The rebate program, which had been in effect since March 11, 2003, has resulted in agency savings exceeding \$11,500. By law, fuel may not be sold below cost in Montana. Consideration will be given to reinstating the rebate as fuel margins and market conditions change.

Going Somewhere? Wright Express offers road warriors a free online tool for locating the best prices of fuel and for mapping and routing stations that accept the card. For access information and log-on credentials, please contact Tom Gustin at (406) 444-3312, e-mail tgustin@state.mt.us.

THINK ABOUT IT

"For success, attitude is equally important as ability."

Harry F. Banks

SURPLUS PROPERTY NEWS AND NOTES

Coming Soon. You will be able to complete and submit a surplus property form on-line. Watch for our brochure explaining how Surplus Property works and how to access the on-line form. For more information please contact Mark Athearn at 495-6016.

PURCHASING USERS GROUP

The Winter meeting of the Purchasing Users Group will be Thursday, March 18, 2004, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Public Health and Human Services Auditorium, 111 North Sanders in Helena.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

"GSD Update" is published quarterly by the General Services Division of the Montana Department of Administration. For more information, or to get on the mailing list, contact us at (406) 444-2575. Our address is: P.O. Box 200135, Helena, MT 59620-0135. Fax number: (406) 444-2529. Website address: www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/gsd.